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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 BRASILIA 001148

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SENSITIVE

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PINR](#) [KCRM](#) [PTER](#) [BR](#)

SUBJECT: FARC MAY BE BUYING STOLEN MEDICINE IN BRAZIL

REF: A. BRASILIA 785

[1](#)B. RECIFE 39

[1](#)1. (SBU) SUMMARY. Since November 2004, Federal Police in the Brazilian state of Amazonas have been investigating the disappearance of 8,000 bottles of Glucantime, a drug used to treat a parasitic disease common in the Amazon. Last October, locals in Amazonas state found an abandoned boat that contained Glucantime, money, and ammunition rounds on a remote river near the Brazil/Columbia border that may have been en route to the FARC. Since Glucantime is sold and distributed exclusively by the Brazilian Ministry of Health, the Federal Police are also investigating a possible connection between the FARC and local government officials during the sale of the drug. In a related development, the Joint Congressional Committee for Intelligence Affairs has developed a plan to combat guerrilla groups operating in Brazil. End Summary.

#### Missing Medicine Linked to FARC

[1](#)2. (SBU) Recent press reports are indicating that, since November 2004, Federal Police in the Brazilian state of Amazonas have been investigating the disappearance of 8,000 bottles of Glucantime, a drug used to treat a parasitic disease common in the Amazon. According to a statement by Federal Police Superintendent Graca Malheiros, locals in the Sao Gabriel municipality in western Amazonas state found an abandoned boat in October 2004 on a river near the border between Brazil, Columbia, and Peru. Locals living near the river told the Federal Police that they found the drifting boat after a thunderstorm last October. According to the locals, three men had been aboard the boat during the storm and one died. The nationality or whereabouts of the men are unknown. Local river dwellers found approximately 2,700 Glucantime bottles, an unpublished sum of money, and over 15,000 rounds of ammunition onboard. Malheiros believes that the Glucantime was destined for Colombia based on the boat's location and the other items found on board.

[1](#)3. (SBU) Since Glucantime is sold and distributed exclusively by the Brazilian Ministry of Health, Federal Police in Amazonas are investigating state Health Secretariat employees who were involved in the original sale of 8,000 Glucantime bottles. (Note: The 2,700 bottles found onboard the abandoned boat last October were included in this sale. End Note.) In January 2005, Federal Police discovered that 5,300 bottles of Glucantime were sold and then rerouted to an unknown location by four employees at the state Health Secretariat. Since the number of bottles missing is larger

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than what was found on the boat, Federal Police are investigating the disappearance of the missing bottles. The Federal Police believe that two state Secretariat of Health employees and two contractors probably diverted the missing medicine to the FARC. One employee has been fired; the others are still under investigation.

#### Joint Intelligence Affairs Committee

[1](#)4. (SBU) Recent press reports allege that the FARC might be moving ammunition, drugs, and other supplies along the Brazilian border between Columbia and Peru. In response to these allegations, the Joint Congressional Committee for Intelligence Affairs announced that it has created an action plan to combat guerrilla groups like the FARC that are linked to the international trafficking of drugs and other contraband. The committee sent a classified report to legislators two weeks ago outlining the plan. The report will remain classified until the Committee Chairman, Senator Cristovam Buarque (PT-Brasilia), approves the report. Buarque said the committee will vote on the proposed action plan after Congress concludes its investigation into allegations that the FARC channeled US \$5 million to President Lula's presidential campaign in 2002 (ref A).

COMMENT

[1](#)5. (SBU) In reftels, we noted that the press is making more of alleged FARC connections to Brazil's PT party and the Landless Movement (MST) than seems warranted by the facts. Yet there may be truth to the reports that FARC is purchasing

stolen medicine in Amazonas state. Federal police reports, the circumstances surrounding the abandoned boat, and the medicine's disappearance are further evidence of how the FARC uses Brazil's vast Amazonian region in support of its terrorist activities. It is also noteworthy that, despite press reports, senior GOB leaders seem to be ignoring this event.

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